United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

General Assembly

Official Records • Fifty-second Session
Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20)

Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

General Assembly
Official Records · Fifty-second Session
Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20)

United Nations · New York, 1997

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

ISSN 0255-1144

[Original: English]

[3 September 1997]

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 20	1
II.	RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS	21 - 178	5
	A. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes	21 - 27	5
	B. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session and implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	28 - 106	6
	1. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session	29	6
	2. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space	30 - 69	7
	3. Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including, inter alia, applications for developing countries	70 - 76	14
	4. Use of nuclear power sources in outer space	77 - 84	15
	5. Space debris	85 - 91	16
	6. Space transportation systems	92 - 95	17
	7. Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries	96 - 98	18
	8. Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine; progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the International Geosphere-Biosphere (Global Change) Programme; matters relating to planetary exploration; and matters relating to astronomy	99 - 102	18

	Paragraphs	Page
9. Themes fixed for special attention at the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee	103 - 106	19
C. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-sixth session	107 - 136	19
1. Question of review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space	108 - 111	19
2. Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union	112 - 127	20
3. New agenda items	128 - 136	22
D. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status	137 - 144	23
E. Report of the Preparatory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference	145 - 161	24
F. Other matters	162 - 171	27
1. Reports to the Committee	162 - 163	27
2. Membership of the Committee	164	28
3. Observer status	165 - 166	28
4. Records of the Committee	167 - 170	28
5. Possible consideration of new projects in outer space activities	171	28
G. Future work	172 - 177	29
H. Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies	178	30

Annexes

I.	Note by the Secretariat: Working Methods of the Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies (A/AC.105/L.213)	31
II.	Punta del Este Declaration	34

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space held its fortieth session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 2 to 10 June 1997. The officers of the Committee were as follows:

Chairman: U. R. Rao (India)

Vice-Chairman: Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile)

Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur: Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco)

The verbatim unedited transcripts of the meetings of the Committee are contained in documents COPUOS/T.433 to 442.

Meetings of subsidiary bodies

2. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had held its thirty-fourth session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 17 to 27 February 1997 under the chairmanship of Dietrich Rex (Germany). The report of the Subcommittee was issued as document A/AC.105/672.

3. The Legal Subcommittee had held its thirty-sixth session at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 1 to 8 April 1997 under the chairmanship of Václav Mikulka (Czech Republic). The report of the Subcommittee was issued as document A/AC.105/674. The verbatim unedited transcripts of the meetings of the Subcommittee are contained in documents A/AC.105/C.2/1997/T.598 to 604.

Adoption of the agenda

4. At its opening meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session by the Chairman.

2. Adoption of the agenda.

3. Election of officers.

4. Statement by the Chairman.

5. General exchange of views.

6. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

7. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/672).

8. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-sixth session (A/AC.105/674).

9. (a) Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82);

(b) Preparations by the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Third UNISPACE Conference (UNISPACE III Conference), a special

session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space open to all States Members of the United Nations, based on the report of the Advisory Committee.

10. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status.

11. Other matters.

12. Report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

Membership and attendance

5. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1721 E (XVI) of 20 December 1961, 3182 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973, 32/196 B of 20 December 1977, 35/16 of 3 November 1980 and 49/33 of 9 December 1994 and decision 45/315 of 11 December 1990, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space was composed of the following Member States: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yugoslavia.

6. A list of representatives attending the session is contained in document A/AC.105/XL/INF/1.

7. At its 433rd, 434th and 435th meetings, the Committee decided to invite, at their request, the representatives of Angola, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Holy See, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Thailand, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, together with the League of Arab States, to attend its fortieth session and to address it, as appropriate, on the understanding that it would be without prejudice to further requests of that nature and that it would not involve any decision of the Committee concerning status.

8. Representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also attended the session.

9. Representatives of the European Space Agency (ESA), the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), the International Law Association (ILA), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (Inmarsat), the International Organization of Space Communications (INTERSPUTNIK) and the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) also attended the session.

Proceedings

Working methods and bureau of the Committee

10. The Committee recalled that at its thirty-ninth session, held from 3 to 14 June 1996, it had entrusted its Chairman, with the assistance of the other

members of the bureau and the Secretariat, to undertake inter-sessional informal consultations among the members of the Committee with the aim of reaching consensus decisions before the fortieth session of the Committee on the modalities of establishing a new composition of bureaux keeping in view the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation. The Committee had recommended that all proposals made by delegations and groups of delegations, including the need for agenda restructuring and an examination of the duration of the session, would be taken fully into account in the framework of those informal consultations.[1]

11. In accordance with that mandate, the Chairman convened six meetings of inter-sessional informal consultations among members of the Committee between 24 July 1996 and 16 April 1997 at Vienna and in New York.

12. At the 433rd meeting, the Chairman informed the Committee that, as a result of those informal consultations, members of the Committee had informally agreed upon the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, agenda structures and duration of sessions as reflected in the Chairman's package proposal on the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies (A/AC.105/L.213).

13. The Chairman also informed the Committee that, following formal adoption of his package proposal by the Committee, he would conduct the election of officers for the new bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

14. The Committee, at its 433rd meeting, formally adopted the package proposal of the Chairman on the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and noted with satisfaction that negotiations had taken place following the principle of consensus. The text of the Chairman's package proposal which was adopted by the Committee, is contained in annex I to the present report. At the same meeting, pursuant to the agreement contained in that package, the Committee elected, for the first three-year term starting with its current session, U. R. Rao (India) as its Chairman. The Committee also elected Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile) as its Vice-Chairman and Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco) as its Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur.

15. The Committee paid tribute and expressed its profound gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Peter Hohenfellner (Austria), for his exemplary work in the informal consultations, which had led to innovations in the way in which the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would conduct their future work. The Committee also recognized his years of service to the Committee, both as Chairman and as delegate, and noted the numerous achievements that had been accomplished during his tenure. The Committee also expressed its appreciation to the outgoing Vice-Chairman and to the outgoing Rapporteur, Dumitru Mazilu (Romania) and Edgard Telles Ribeiro (Brazil), respectively, for their commitment and contribution during their years of service to the Committee.

Statements

16. At the 433rd meeting, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna made a statement highlighting the importance of the work of the Committee in promoting the use of space technology for the benefit of all peoples, and the possible challenges and opportunities that awaited the Committee in the twenty-first century, following the United Nations Third UNISPACE Conference (UNISPACE III Conference).

17. At its 433rd to 436th meetings, the Committee held a general exchange of views, in the course of which statements were made by the representatives of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

18. At the 434th meeting, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat made a statement reviewing the work of the Office during the previous year and the documentation before the Committee.

19. Statements were also made by the representatives of ESCAP, ESA, ILA, Inmarsat, INTERSPUTNIK and ISPRS, as well as the Expert on Space Applications of the Office for Outer Space Affairs. The Committee also heard a special presentation by the representative of Spain on small satellites at its 441st meeting, on 9 June 1997.

20. After considering the various items before it, the Committee, at its 442nd meeting, on 10 June 1997, adopted its report to the General Assembly containing the recommendations and decisions set out below.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

A. Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes (agenda item 6)

21. In accordance with paragraph 35 of General Assembly resolution 51/123 of 13 December 1996, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its consideration, as a matter of priority, of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, taking into account the views expressed at its thirty-ninth session and at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

22. The Committee was of the view that the request of the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/123, to the Committee to continue to consider that item as a matter of priority and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-second session showed the concern felt by the international community and the need to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, taking into account the needs of developing countries. The Committee, through its work in the scientific, technical and legal fields, had an important role to play in ensuring that outer space was maintained for peaceful purposes. It was the firm belief of the members of the Committee that current efforts should be continued that would strengthen the role of the Committee in maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. The Committee had responsibilities relating to the strengthening of the international basis for the peaceful exploration and uses of outer space, which could cover, among other matters, further development of international space law, including, as appropriate, the preparation of international agreements governing various practical peaceful applications of space science and technology. Strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space also implied the need for the Committee itself to improve, whenever necessary, the methods and forms of its work.

23. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/122 of 13 December 1996, had adopted the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interests of All States, taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, set forth in the annex to that resolution. Some delegations expressed the view that the Declaration could serve as a vehicle to further develop international consensus for greater cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

24. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that many of the reform measures initiated by the Committee and the Secretariat for more effective utilization of existing resources not only had revitalized the work of the Committee and its subcommittees, but were also being used as models for similar efforts in other bodies of the United Nations.

25. While recognizing the competence of the Conference on Disarmament on questions relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, some delegations expressed the view that the Committee should complement and contribute to the work being done in the Conference and in the First Committee of the General Assembly, considering that the peaceful uses of outer space and questions relating to the disarmament of outer space were inseparably linked and that the scope of that priority agenda item included such subjects as transparency and confidence-building measures. Those delegations expressed the view that the Committee should therefore be kept informed of the progress made by the Conference on such questions and that an adequate and practical mechanism

of coordination should be established between the two bodies. The view was expressed that the Committee had not received any information from the Conference on Disarmament on matters relating to the peaceful uses of outer space; that delegation therefore suggested that the Secretariat should provide such information in the future.

26. Other delegations expressed the view that the Committee had been created to address international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, with a clear separation between its role and that of other United Nations forums dealing with disarmament, and that contacts between the Committee and disarmament bodies would be inappropriate. Those delegations expressed the view that the Committee should contribute to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes by strengthening the scientific and technical content of its work and by promoting broader and deeper international and regional cooperation between all countries in outer space activities, especially in the fields of disaster warning and mitigation, and global search-and-rescue activities.

27. The view was expressed that the Committee should continue to encourage the use of outer space in a manner conducive to international peace, safety and security. That delegation also expressed the view that the existing legal regime governing outer space activities could be examined to determine if it should be modernized by, for example, adopting standards and practices that could further enhance fields of interaction between Member States. The delegation noted that it had submitted to the Committee at its thirty-ninth session questions that could be used for such an examination and suggested that other Member States might wish to reply to those questions in order to further substantive discussions on those and other related issues.

B. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session (agenda item 7) and implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (agenda item 9 (a))

28. The Committee considered jointly agenda item 7, entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session", and agenda item 9 (a), entitled "Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space".

1. Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session

29. The Committee took note with appreciation of the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/672), covering the results of its deliberations on the items assigned to it by the General Assembly in resolution 51/123.

2. Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

(a) Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

30. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Subcommittee had given priority consideration to its agenda item on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82)[2] and had re-established, under the chairmanship of Muhammad Nasim Shah (Pakistan), the Working Group of the Whole to Evaluate the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

31. The Committee noted with satisfaction that a number of reports related to the recommendations of UNISPACE 82 had been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole at its tenth session, held in 1996 (A/AC.105/637 and Corr.1, annex II), which had been endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 20 of resolution 51/123. The Committee also noted that, in preparation for the UNISPACE III Conference, further technical studies and reports to be prepared by the Office for Outer Space Affairs would be on subjects commissioned by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee acting as Advisory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference and on subjects that could serve as background papers either for the preparatory activities for the UNISPACE III Conference or for the Conference itself, in accordance with the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole at its eleventh session, held in 1997.

32. The Committee noted that the Working Group of the Whole had reiterated a number of recommendations concerning the further implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole at its eleventh session, contained in the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/672, annex II). The Committee noted the view of the Working Group that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should be given the full support of the United Nations in order to implement fully the recommendations of UNISPACE 82. That recommendation had been made on the understanding that the Office for Outer Space Affairs would give priority to the full implementation of the Programme within the available resources of its regular budget (ibid., para. 12 (c)).

33. The Committee recommended that the Working Group of the Whole should be reconvened at the thirty-fifth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to continue its work.

34. The Committee, while expressing its appreciation to all Governments that had made or had expressed their intention of making contributions for the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, took note of the disappointment expressed by representatives of developing countries at the lack of financial resources at the disposal of the Programme to implement those recommendations fully, and appealed to Member States to support the Programme through voluntary contributions.

(b) United Nations Programme on Space Applications

35. At the outset of the deliberations of the Committee on that item, the Expert on Space Applications reviewed the activities carried out and planned under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications during the period 1996-1998. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Expert for the effective manner in which he had implemented the Programme within the limited funds at his disposal.

36. The Committee took note of the activities of the Programme as set out in the report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/672, paras. 23-34). It was pleased to note that further progress was being made in the implementation of activities of the Programme planned for 1997.

(i) United Nations workshops, training courses and seminars

37. With regard to the United Nations workshops, training courses and seminars for 1997, the Committee expressed its appreciation to the following:

(a) The Government of India and ESA, for co-sponsoring the United Nations/European Space Agency Workshop on Satellite Communications, organized in cooperation with the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Asia and the Pacific, and held at Ahmedabad, India, from 20 to 24 January 1997;

(b) The Government of Austria, for sponsoring, in cooperation with the United Nations, the United Nations Seminar on Space Futures and Human Security, held at Alpbach, Austria, from 27 to 30 January 1997;

(c) The Government of Sweden, for co-sponsoring the Seventh United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators, held at Stockholm from 5 May to 13 June 1997;

(d) The Government of Honduras and ESA, for co-sponsoring the Seventh United Nations/European Space Agency Workshop on Basic Space Science, to be held at Tegucigalpa from 16 to 20 June 1997;

(e) ESA, for co-sponsoring the United Nations/European Space Agency Workshop on the Cooperative Information Network Linking Scientists, Educators, Professionals and Decision Makers in Africa (COPINE), to be held in the fourth quarter of 1997;

(f) The Government of Austria, the Province of Styria, the City of Graz and ESA, for co-sponsoring the United Nations/Austria/European Space Agency Symposium on Space Industry Cooperation with the Developing World, to be held at Graz, Austria, from 8 to 11 September 1997;

(g) The Government of Israel, for sponsoring the United Nations/Israel International Workshop on Satellite Communications Technology for Capacity-building, to be held at Haifa, Israel, from 21 to 25 September 1997;

(h) The Government of Italy, the European Commission, ESA and IAF, for co-sponsoring the United Nations/International Astronautical Federation/European Space Agency Workshop on Space Technology as a Cost-effective Tool to Improve Infrastructure in Developing Countries, to be held at Turin, Italy, from 2 to 5 October 1997;

(i) The Government of Brazil, the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and ESA, for co-sponsoring the United Nations/Committee on Space Research/Brazil Workshop on Data Analysis Techniques, to be held in Brazil from 17 to 21 November 1997;

(j) ESA and the Department for Development Support and Management Services of the United Nations Secretariat, for co-sponsoring the fourth United Nations/European Space Agency Training Course on Applications of the European Remote Sensing Satellite Data for Natural Resources, Renewable Energy and the Environment, organized for English-speaking African Countries, to be held at Frascati, Italy, from 24 November to 5 December 1997.

38. The Committee took note of a possible Second United Nations International Conference on Spin-off Benefits of Space Technology: Challenges and Opportunities, to be held in the United States of America in October or November 1997.

39. The Committee endorsed the programme of United Nations workshops, training courses and seminars proposed for 1998, as outlined by the Expert on Space Applications in his report (A/AC.105/660, para. 31), and recommended those activities for approval by the General Assembly. The Committee noted the plans for the following activities which, with the exception of the first one, would be used to promote awareness of the UNISPACE III Conference:

(a) Eighth United Nations/Sweden International Training Course on Remote Sensing Education for Educators;

(b) United Nations/European Space Agency Regional Meeting on Space Technology and Applications for Development (with emphasis on microwave remote sensing applications and including preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference), to be held in Malaysia;

(c) United Nations Regional Conference for Decision Makers on Space Technology Development (including preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference) to be held in Africa;

(d) United Nations Regional Meeting on Space Technology and Applications for Development (with emphasis on information technology and including preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference), to be held in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(e) Third United Nations Regional Conference on Spin-off Benefits of Space Technology, to be held in Asia;

(f) United Nations/Austria Symposium on Space Technology and Applications for Development (including preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference), to be held at Graz, Austria;

(g) United Nations/International Astronautical Federation Workshop on Space Technology Applications for Developing Countries, to be held at Melbourne, Australia;

(h) United Nations/Austria Second Seminar on Space Futures and Human Security, to be held in the Province of Tyrol, Austria.

40. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Chile and Malaysia had offered to host United Nations regional meetings on space technology and applications

for development for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Asia and the Pacific, respectively.

41. The Committee noted with appreciation the financial contributions of $25,000 from the Government of Austria, $125,000 from ESA and $10,000 from IAF in support of the 1997 activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. The Committee noted that other Member States were planning to make contributions.

42. The Committee noted with appreciation the provision, by host countries and other countries, of experts as instructors and speakers in the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. It also noted the financial and other assistance provided to the Programme by: Department for Development Support and Management Services and Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, ITU, Austrian Space Agency, European Commission, ESA, German Space Agency (DARA), GlobalStar, Institute for Space and Astronautical Science, Inter-American Development Bank, IAF, International Astronomical Union (IAU), International Centre for Theoretical Physics, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Inmarsat, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (Intelsat), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States, National Space Development Agency (NASDA) of Japan, Nuovo Telespazio, Planetary Society and Remote Sensing Technology Centre (Restec) of Japan.

(ii) Long-range fellowships for in-depth training

43. The Committee expressed its appreciation to ESA for offering fellowships through the United Nations in the period 1996-1997 and for renewing its offering of the fellowships for the period 1997-1998.

44. The Committee also expressed its appreciation to the Government of China for continuing to provide seven one-year fellowships to developing countries through relevant United Nations bodies in 1997 on photogrammetry and remote sensing, geodesy and cartography, as a contribution to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

45. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the fellowship programme instituted in Brazil at the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais (INPE) in 1985 had fully matured through its financial co-sponsorship by the United Nations University, and its operation was currently being managed by those two institutions.

(iii) Technical advisory services

46. The Committee noted that the Programme had provided or would provide the following technical advisory services: to the Government of Uruguay, in following up, as pro tempore secretariat, the recommendations of the Third Space Conference of the Americas; and to the Government of the Republic of Korea, in the growth and operation of the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Council.

47. The Committee also noted that the Programme was collaborating with several African countries on the implementation of a satellite-based cooperative information network linking scientists, educators, professionals and decision makers in Africa (COPINE), in order to address the urgent need to establish an efficient communications network among African and European professionals and

scientists at the national, continental and intercontinental levels; with the Department for Development Support and Management Services and ESA on follow-up activities related to the recommendations of the training courses on applications of the European remote sensing satellite data to natural resources, renewable energy and the environment, held at Frascati, Italy, in 1993, 1994 and 1995; and with ESA on follow-up activities relating to the series of United Nations/ESA workshops on basic space science.

48. The Committee further noted that the Programme was elaborating an inter-agency project proposal on a satellite-based disaster-warning broadcasting system for rural and remote communities of small island developing States.

(iv) Regional centres for space science and technology education

49. The Committee welcomed the information on the establishment of the regional centres for space science and technology education, as reflected in the report of the Expert on Space Applications (A/AC.105/660, paras. 3-12 and annex I) and requested Member States and space-related organizations to provide voluntary financial resources and other contributions in kind to support that effort.

50. The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph 30 of its resolution 50/27, had endorsed the recommendation made by the Committee at its thirty-eighth session[3] that those centres be established on the basis of affiliation to the United Nations as early as possible, as such affiliation would provide the centres with the necessary recognition and would strengthen the possibilities of their attracting donors and of establishing academic relationships with national and international space-related institutions.

51. The Committee recommended that the United Nations, through the Office for Outer Space Affairs, should continue to provide all necessary support, within the limits of its existing resources, to the centres.

52. The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/123, had noted with satisfaction that significant progress had also been achieved in establishing regional centres for space science and technology education in the other regions covered by the regional commissions.

53. With regard to the regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, inaugurated in India in November 1995, the Committee noted that participation in the Governing Board of the Centre and in its activities was open to Member States in the region and that, in due course and upon approval by its Governing Board, the Centre would grow into a network of nodes enabling it to fully utilize the resources and potential of the region. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the first nine-month education programme of the Centre had focused on remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) and had been completed and that the second programme on satellite communications had started in January 1997.

54. The Committee noted that, at the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, some delegations had expressed the view that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should undertake further consultations among States in the region in order to resolve outstanding differences in respect of the Centre in Asia and the Pacific.

55. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Brazil and Mexico on 11 March 1987 had signed an agreement establishing the regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The

Committee also noted with satisfaction the statement of the representative of Bolivia, as Chairman of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States and speaking on their behalf, in support of the establishment and operation of that Centre for the benefit of the States in the region, as the Centre would help to strengthen indigenous capacity in space science and technology, promote the exchange of space-related information and help to coordinate the space activities of its members. The Chairman of the Group also expressed the profound interest of States in the region in participating in the activities of the Centre.

56. Regarding the centres in Africa, the Committee noted that Morocco (for the French-speaking African States) and Nigeria (for the English-speaking African States) had developed and circulated for comment the text of the draft agreements that would be entered into by the States concerned later in 1997. The Committee also noted that the establishment of those centres was at an advanced stage and encouraged those States to establish the centres as soon as possible.

57. The Committee noted that discussions were in progress with Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic on the establishment of a regional centre in western Asia.

58. The Committee noted that discussions between Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey were in progress on the establishment of a network of space science and technology education and research institutions for States of Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe and that the activities of the network would be in harmony with the relevant work of existing institutions in Europe and would be open to international cooperation. The Committee also noted that a meeting of experts had been held at Vienna on 17 and 18 October 1996 on the establishment of the network and that the experts had resumed their deliberations on 13 and 14 February 1997. The Committee further noted that at the first meeting the representatives of Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey had agreed to establish the network. The Committee noted that at the resumed meeting the experts had agreed to work with the Office for Outer Space Affairs to undertake a study on the technical requirements, design, operation mechanism and funding of the network. The Committee noted as well that Italy supported the initiative to establish the network of space science and technology education and research institutions.

(v) Promotion of greater cooperation in space science and technology

59. Regarding the promotion of greater cooperation in space science and technology, the Committee noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications continued to co-sponsor symposia and workshops in conjunction with COSPAR and ISPRS meetings.

(c) International space information service

60. With regard to the international space information service, the Committee noted with satisfaction the publication of the eighth volume of "Seminars of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications: selected papers on remote sensing, satellite communications and space science" (A/AC.105/650), containing papers from the seminars, workshops and training courses of the 1996 activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications; and "Highlights in space: progress in space science, technology and applications, international cooperation and space law"(A/AC.105/654), based on annual reports prepared by

COSPAR and IAF, as well as input submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee by the International Institute of Space Law.

61. The Committee noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to augment its international space information service through the development of a database capability and a home page on the Internet (http://www.un.or.at/OOSA_kiosk/index.html), through which a wide range of information regarding the space-related activities of the United Nations, particularly those of the Committee and the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, could be accessed.

(d) Coordination of space activities within the United Nations system and inter-agency cooperation

62. With regard to the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system and inter-agency cooperation, the Committee noted that the General Assembly, in paragraph 25 of resolution 51/123, had invited all Governments within the organizations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations working in the field of outer space or on space-related matters to take effective action for the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

63. The Committee also noted with appreciation that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its thirty-fourth session, had continued to stress the necessity of ensuring continuous and effective consultations and coordination in the field of outer space activities among organizations within the United Nations system and the avoidance of duplication of activities (A/AC.105/672, para. 39). The Committee noted with satisfaction that the eighteenth Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities had been held at Vienna from 28 to 30 May 1997 (A/AC.105/676) and that a report on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system had been submitted to the Committee (A/AC.105/675). The Committee also noted with appreciation that the nineteenth Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities would be held at Vienna from 27 to 29 May 1998.

64. The Committee noted with appreciation that representatives of United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and other international organizations had participated in all stages of its work. The Committee found that the reports submitted by those bodies had helped to enable it and its subsidiary bodies to fulfil their role as a focal point for international cooperation in space, especially with respect to the practical applications of space science and technology in developing countries.

(e) Regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms

65. Regarding regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms, the Committee noted with satisfaction that, pursuant to paragraph 24 of General Assembly resolution 51/123 and the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, the Secretariat had continued to seek to promote the establishment and strengthening of regional mechanisms of cooperation by organizing regional workshops and training courses as part of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and by providing technical assistance for regional activities and conferences in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as by promoting the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education.

66. The Committee noted the contributions made by other international organizations towards the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82.

In particular, the Committee noted that the specialized agencies of the United Nations were continuing their activities in the areas of space applications within their respective mandates; COSPAR, IAF, IAU, ILA and ISPRS were continuing to promote international cooperation and exchange of information relating to space activities; and ESA was continuing its programme of international cooperative space activities, including training programmes for the benefit of developing countries, in support of the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and technical assistance programmes.

67. The Committee noted that the COPINE project would offer an excellent opportunity to develop sources related to space applications for Africa, particularly in the exchange of information needed to promote progress in health care, agriculture, education, science and technology, and the management and monitoring of natural resources and the environment.

68. The Committee took note of the Punta del Este Declaration, adopted by the Third Space Conference of the Americas, held at Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 4 to 8 November 1996, which was aimed at promoting cooperation in the area of space activities and which reaffirmed the commitment of States in the Americas to the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. In the Declaration, the Third Space Conference of the Americas had decided to adopt a plan of action for regional cooperation in space matters, aimed at promoting and strengthening multilateral cooperation programmes in the region (see annex II to the present report).

69. The Committee noted that the fourth Asia-Pacific Conference on Multilateral Cooperation in Space Technology and Applications, to be hosted by Bahrain from 1 to 4 December 1997, would provide opportunities for agencies, institutions and individual experts, as well as policy and decision makers, to exchange views on the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperative activities in space science and technology and their applications.

3. Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including, inter alia, applications for developing countries

70. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had given priority consideration to matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites.

71. The Committee noted the importance, particularly for developing countries, of sharing experiences and technologies, of cooperating through international and regional remote sensing centres and of working jointly on collaborative projects. It recognized that remote sensing activities should take into account the need to provide appropriate and non-discriminatory access to meet the needs of developing countries.

72. The Committee recognized the importance of ongoing international efforts to ensure the continuity, compatibility and complementarity of systems for remote sensing of the Earth and to promote cooperation through regular meetings of satellite operators, ground-station operators and users. It also noted the value of remote sensing systems for environmental monitoring and stressed the need for the international community to utilize remote sensing data in an effort to implement fully the recommendations contained in Agenda 21,[4] adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992.

73. The Committee emphasized the importance of making remote sensing data and analysed information available to all countries at reasonable cost and in a timely manner. It also recognized the example of international cooperation in the World Meteorological Organization in the exchange of meteorological data as provided for in World Meteorological Congress resolution 40 of 21 June 1995.

74. The Committee noted with satisfaction the prototype Information Locator Service (ILS), funded by DARA and currently in the design and implementation phase, which was aimed at assisting users in developing countries in locating and accessing sources of information about Earth observation data, projects and services (http://www.dfd.dlr.de/CILS).

75. The Committee noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fourth session, recalling General Assembly resolution 41/65 of 3 December 1986, by which the Assembly had adopted the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space, had recommended continuing, at its thirty-fifth session, its discussion on remote sensing activities conducted in accordance with the Principles (A/AC.105/672, para. 67). The Committee endorsed that recommendation.

76. The Committee also endorsed the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that the item should be retained on the agenda of the Subcommittee as a priority item for its thirty-fifth session (ibid., para. 68).

4. Use of nuclear power sources in outer space

77. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had continued its consideration, on a priority basis, of the item relating to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space. The Committee also noted that the Subcommittee had reconvened the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space to enable it to resume its work. The Committee took note of the discussions of the Subcommittee and its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, as reflected in its report, and of the report of the Working Group (A/AC.105/672, paras. 69-87 and annex III).

78. The Committee recalled that the General Assembly had adopted the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, as contained in its resolution 47/68 of 14 December 1992. While noting that the Principles provided that they should be reopened for review and revision by the Committee no later than two years after their adoption, the Committee recalled that, at its thirty-ninth session, it had agreed that the Principles should remain in their current form until amended and that, before amendment, proper consideration should be given to the aims and objectives of any proposed revision.

79. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that, while a revision of the Principles was not necessary at the current stage, it was important that States making use of nuclear power sources should conduct their activities in full accordance with the Principles (ibid., para. 80).

80. The Committee also agreed that regular discussions on the issue should continue at future sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and that the Subcommittee and the Working Group should continue to receive the widest input on matters affecting the use of nuclear power sources in outer space and any contribution related to improving the scope and application of the Principles.

81. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that Member States should continue to be invited to report to the Secretary-General on a regular basis with regard to national and international research concerning the safety of space objects with nuclear power sources, that further studies should be conducted on the issue of the collision of orbiting space objects with nuclear power sources on board with space debris and that the Subcommittee should be kept informed of the results of such studies (ibid., para. 79).

82. The Committee noted that the Russian Federation had provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee detailed information on all aspects of the construction and flight of the Mars 96 spacecraft and in particular on the safety provisions concerning the nuclear power sources the spacecraft carried on board.

83. The Committee noted that the United States had, in accordance with principle 4 of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, informed the Secretary-General on how States might obtain the results of the environmental assessment in connection with the Cassini spacecraft to be launched in October 1997, which would carry a nuclear power source on board (A/AC.105/677).

84. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that the item should be retained on the agenda for the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee and that the time allocated to the topic in both the Working Group and the Subcommittee should be adjusted as appropriate.

5. Space debris

85. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had continued its consideration of the agenda item on space debris on a priority basis. The Committee took note of the discussion of the Subcommittee on space debris, as reflected in its report (A/AC.105/672, paras. 88-113).

86. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that consideration of space debris was important and that international cooperation was needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the potential impact of space debris on future space missions. The Committee also agreed that it was essential for Member States to pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, in accordance with paragraph 32 of General Assembly resolution 51/123.

87. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, following the invitation of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, representatives of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) had made a technical presentation on the subject of space debris modelling and risk assessment. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that IADC should be invited to make a technical presentation on space debris mitigation practices to the Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session (ibid., para. 96).

88. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that it was important to have a firm scientific and technical basis for future action on the complex attributes of space debris and that the Subcommittee should focus on understanding aspects of research related to space debris, including debris measurement techniques; mathematical modelling of the debris environment;

characterization of the space debris environment; and measures to mitigate the risks of space debris, including spacecraft design measures to protect against space debris (ibid., paras. 102-103). The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Subcommittee had conducted its work based on the multi-year work plan that the Subcommittee had adopted at its thirty-second session to address specific topics relating to space debris to be covered during the period 1996-1998.

89. The Committee noted with satisfaction the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the current stage of the multi-year work plan, on the topic of modelling of the space debris environment and risk assessment (ibid., para. 104). The Committee also noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session would concentrate on the final stage of its multi-year work plan, namely, space debris mitigation measures. The Committee took note of the technical changes and the amendment to the technical report for 1996 (A/AC.105/C.1/L.214). It agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that any changes or updates to each part of the technical report would be made at the following year's session, leading to the report on space debris being finalized by the Subcommittee in 1999, in order to establish a common understanding that could serve as the basis for further deliberations of the Committee on the matter. The Committee agreed that the multi-year work plan should continue to be implemented with flexibility in order to address all relevant issues on space debris.

90. The Committee noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had requested Member States to provide information on the relevant parts of the draft technical report to the Chairman of the Subcommittee in advance, so as to facilitate the preparation of the technical report and ensure that the most recent results of international research were taken into account properly. However, it was for the Subcommittee itself to decide upon the most appropriate ways and means of drafting the final report.

91. The Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should continue consideration of space debris, as a priority item, at its next session.

6. Space transportation systems

92. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Subcommittee had continued its consideration of the item relating to space transportation systems and their implications for future activities in space.

93. The Committee took note of the progress being achieved in the various programmes in operation or being planned by China, India, Japan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States and by ESA.

94. The Committee stressed the importance of international cooperation in space transportation in order to provide all countries with access to the benefits of space science and technology. It also took note of recent developments in the launch vehicle industry.

95. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that it should continue its consideration of the item at its next session.

7. Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit; examination of its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to space communications developments, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries

96. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Subcommittee had continued its consideration of the item relating to the geostationary orbit and space communications.

97. It noted that delegations had reiterated and elaborated on the views concerning the geostationary orbit that had been expressed at earlier sessions and had been reflected in earlier reports of the Committee and its two subcommittees.

98. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that it should continue its consideration of the item at its next session.

8. Matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine; progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the International Geosphere-Biosphere (Global Change) Programme; matters relating to planetary exploration; and matters relating to astronomy

99. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Subcommittee had continued to consider the items concerning matters relating to life sciences, including space medicine; progress in national and international space activities related to the Earth environment, in particular progress in the International Geosphere-Biosphere (Global Change) Programme; matters relating to planetary exploration; and matters relating to astronomy.

100. The Committee noted with satisfaction the wide variety of space activities being undertaken in those areas and the extensive international cooperation in those activities, as reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/672, paras. 128-149). It encouraged further cooperation in those areas and, in particular, further efforts to increase the participation of developing countries.

101. The Committee agreed that it could make an important contribution in the area of environment and development by promoting international cooperation in the applications of space technologies for environmental monitoring and sustainable development. In particular, the Committee agreed that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications could play an important role in assisting developing countries in strengthening their capabilities in related space technologies and applications, particularly in reducing poverty and enhancing rural development, taking into consideration women's rights through its education, training and technical advisory activities.

102. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that it should continue its consideration of those items at its next session.

9. Themes fixed for special attention at the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

103. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Subcommittee had considered the theme fixed for special attention at the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 1997: "Space systems for direct broadcasting and global information systems for space research".

104. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, COSPAR and IAF had conducted a symposium on the theme. The Committee expressed appreciation to COSPAR and IAF for their support of the work of the Subcommittee.

105. The Committee endorsed the recommendation that, in view of the UNISPACE III Conference, the new theme fixed for special attention at the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee, in 1998, should be "Scientific and technical aspects and applications of space-based meteorology". It also endorsed the recommendation that COSPAR and IAF, in liaison with Member States, should be invited to arrange a symposium on that theme, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee, in order to complement discussions within the Subcommittee on the theme.

106. The Committee noted with appreciation the summary of the symposium and the scientific and technical presentations made during the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/673).

C. Report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-sixth session (agenda item 8)

107. The Committee took note with appreciation of the report of the Legal Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-sixth session (A/AC.105/674), which contained the results of its deliberations on the items assigned to it by the General Assembly in resolution 51/123.

1. Question of review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space

108. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123 and as reflected in the report of the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/674, paras. 21-27), the Subcommittee had considered the item relating to the review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/68.

109. The Committee agreed that the Principles would remain valid for the time being and that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should consider the need for revision in the light of changing technology before the Legal Subcommittee or the Committee undertook any actual revision.

110. The Committee noted that the Legal Subcommittee (ibid., para. 25) had agreed that, at the current stage, revision of the Principles was not warranted and that therefore it should not open discussion of the item during its thirty-sixth session.

111. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee (ibid., para. 26) that consideration of the Principles by its Working Group on agenda item 3 should again be suspended for one year, pending the results of the work in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, without prejudice to the possibility of reconvening the Working Group if, in the opinion of the Legal Subcommittee, sufficient progress was made in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session, in 1998, to warrant the reconvening of the Working Group by the Legal Subcommittee. The Committee also endorsed the recommendation that the item concerning nuclear power sources should be retained on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee to give delegations an opportunity to discuss it in plenary meetings (ibid., para. 27).

2. Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union

112. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Legal Subcommittee, through its Working Group on agenda item 4, under the chairmanship of G. Maffei (Argentina), had continued to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit.

113. The Committee noted the work carried out by the Legal Subcommittee and the Working Group, as reflected in their reports (ibid., paras. 28-36 and annex I).

114. The Committee noted that a variety of views had been expressed on the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space during the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee. Those views were reiterated during the current session of the Committee.

115. Some delegations encouraged those States members of the Committee that had not yet submitted replies to the questionnaire on possible legal issues with regard to aerospace objects to do so as early as possible and those States that had already submitted replies to supplement them with additional data in order to enable the Secretariat to update its analysis so that a more substantive discussion could take place.

116. The Committee took note of the deliberations on the question of the geostationary orbit as contained in the report of the Legal Subcommittee. The Committee also noted that an exchange of views had taken place on the subject, particularly on the basis of the ideas formulated in working papers entitled "Draft resolution: request to the International Telecommunication Union: ensuring equitable access to the geostationary satellite orbit" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.207 and Rev.2), submitted by Germany to the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session (A/AC.105/674, annex II, sect. A), and "Some considerations concerning the utilization of the geostationary satellite orbit" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.200 and Corr.1), submitted by Colombia to the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.105/639, annex III, sect. A).

117. Some delegations expressed the view that the working paper on the geostationary satellite orbit submitted by Germany was a constructive and innovative way of dealing with the topic and should be adopted as a means of

either concluding the discussions on the issue or suspending them until the year 2000.

118. The view was expressed that if the working paper submitted by Germany was not adopted, resulting in either the conclusion or the suspension of the debate on the geostationary orbit, then the matter should be retained on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee only if those delegations that wished to continue the discussion on the subject submitted a detailed work plan, laying out specific and achievable objectives, as had been done for the item on space debris in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the work plan should be agreed to by the Legal Subcommittee.

119. Some delegations expressed the view that, although they welcomed the introduction of the working paper submitted by Germany, they could not agree that the consideration of the geostationary orbit, in the Legal Subcommittee, could either be concluded or suspended, since there was no direct link between the continuous consideration of the agenda topic and the proposed draft resolution. In this regard, the view was expressed that it was premature to suspend discussions of the subject of the geostationary orbit, because the mandate of the Committee on the matter was broader than that suggested by the German working paper; that the working paper submitted by the delegation of Colombia was still being discussed in the Subcommittee; and that even after the adoption of the proposed draft resolution, it was likely that some delegations would still want to discuss the matter of the geostationary orbit in the Subcommittee. It was therefore suggested that consideration of the working paper submitted by Germany should be separated from the question of whether to conclude or suspend consideration of the geostationary orbit in the Legal Subcommittee, in order to prevent an endless debate from arising in that connection.

120. The Chairmen of the Group of 77 and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States expressed the view that discussions on the geostationary orbit in the Legal Subcommittee had not yet been exhausted since there was a substantive debate in progress, that it was thus premature either to suspend or to conclude the debate on the item in the Subcommittee and that the topic should therefore remain on the agenda of the Subcommittee. Some of those delegations also believed that the working paper submitted by Germany needed to be discussed further, since time was required to analyse such a new and important proposal and to take into account the distinct positions of member States with a view to reaching a convergence of opinions in the future.

121. Some delegations reiterated the view that the geostationary orbit, because of its particular characteristics, required a special, sui generis legal regime to regulate access and utilization by all States, taking into account the needs of developing countries. Those delegations expressed the view that such a legal regime should also take into consideration the particular geographical situation of the equatorial countries.

122. Some delegations reiterated the view that the roles of ITU and of the Legal Subcommittee were complementary and that the Subcommittee could contribute to the establishment of a special legal regime to regulate the use of the geostationary orbit. Other delegations reiterated the view that ITU was the appropriate body to address questions concerning the use of the geostationary orbit and was addressing those questions effectively.

123. Following extensive informal consultations with the participation of about 20 delegations, the delegation of Germany informed the Committee that, the

consultations, although held in an open atmosphere, had not resulted in a breakthrough to allow the draft resolution to be forwarded for adoption by the General Assembly and subsequently to the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference to be held in September/October 1997. The delegation expressed the view that divergencies remained over three issues, namely: (a) that some delegations still insisted on deleting the preambular paragraph, stating that the geostationary satellite orbit was an integral part of outer space and thus governed by the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which would consequently pose the question of why the United Nations Outer Space Committee should discuss the subject; (b) that controversies remained over the character of ITU and its relationship with the Committee, with some delegations regarding ITU as a mere technical organization which did not reflect the competencies of ITU as the United Nations specialized agency for international telecommunications governed by its Convention and Constitution also covering political, legal and technical aspects of the geostationary orbit; and (c) that the agenda item should be deleted or suspended from the agenda in view of the previous fruitless discussions in order to provide delegations with a pause for reflection. Since the German delegation did not see any further merit in continuing the stalled debate unless some delegations changed their position, it therefore withdrew its working paper. The Committee took note of the withdrawal.

124. Some delegations expressed the view that further discussions were needed in the Legal Subcommittee on the geostationary orbit issue and that these could proceed on the basis of A/AC.105/C.2/L.200 and Corr.1 and A/AC.105/C.2/L.205 which were documents that were before the Subcommittee.

125. Some delegations expressed the view that the topic of space debris should be included in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee. Other delegations felt that it would be premature to discuss the issue of space debris in the Legal Subcommittee in view of the many technical issues that needed to be discussed in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

126. The view was expressed that the Committee should examine the scientific and legal aspects of launches made to place human remains in Earth orbit.

127. The Committee recommended that the Legal Subcommittee should continue its consideration of the item at its thirty-seventh session, in 1998.

3. New agenda items

128. The Committee noted that, pursuant to its recommendation,[5] the Legal Subcommittee had continued to conduct its informal consultations with a view to coming up with a list of annotated items agreed upon by consensus that could be considered by the Committee for possible inclusion in the agenda of the Subcommittee. The views of the Subcommittee on the matter are contained in its report (A/AC.105/674, paras. 38-44).

129. The Committee noted that a working paper entitled "Open-ended informal consultations on new agenda items: review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space" (A/AC.105/C.2/L.206/Rev.1) had been submitted by Mexico to the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session. The Committee also noted that discussions on other new items for possible inclusion in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee had taken place during the informal consultations.

130. The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee that a new agenda item entitled "Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space", dealt with in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.206/Rev.1, should be included in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee starting with its session in 1998.

131. The Committee agreed that, in order for the Legal Subcommittee to begin implementing the work plan contained in document A/AC.105/C.2/L.206/Rev.1 at its thirty-seventh session, in 1998, the Secretariat should request Member States to submit their views regarding the obstacles impeding the ratification of the five international legal instruments governing outer space.

132. The view was expressed that a working group on the new agenda item should be established and that it should prepare an analysis of the obstacles that had prevented States from ratifying or adhering to the outer space treaties.

133. The Committee also endorsed the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee that further informal consultations on specific proposals already made for possible new agenda items for the Legal Subcommittee could continue at its next session, in 1998.

134. In this regard, the view was expressed that the issue of conversion into legally binding instruments of the Principles Governing the Use by States of Artificial Earth Satellites for International Direct Television Broadcasting[6] and the Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of Earth from Outer Space[7] should be listed among other items for possible inclusion in the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee.

135. The view was expressed that the Legal Subcommittee should consider the possibility of increasing the number of items on its agenda in order to cover subjects that could strengthen, supplement, or help to understand the application of existing international space law rather than waiting to include items on its agenda in the event of accidents or other occurrences that would merit immediate legal attention.

136. Some delegations expressed the view that with the rapid evolution of technology and organization of space activities, the Legal Subcommittee would be called upon to formulate new legal instruments in the near future. Furthermore, the view was expressed that the Subcommittee should give consideration to the need for the progressive development of international space law and its codification. Therefore, the role of the Legal Subcommittee should be strengthened.

D. Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status (agenda item 10)

137. In accordance with paragraph 36 of General Assembly resolution 51/123, the Committee continued its consideration of spin-off benefits of space technology.

138. The Committee agreed that spin-offs of space technology were yielding many substantial benefits and took note of the efforts in many Member States to develop such spin-off benefits and to disseminate information on such activities to interested countries.

139. The Committee noted that spin-off technology could be used for peacekeeping and humanitarian activities. It also noted that spin-offs of space technology

were providing new techniques in population studies, national economic development planning, disaster prediction and mitigation, geological prospecting, topographic mapping, agriculture and fishing, and literacy and family welfare programmes. It further noted that recent space technology spin-offs had resulted in products such as an anti-shock pressure suit for medical applications, a transportation guidance system, a hand-held electromagnetic probe for inspecting aircraft for cracks and other damage, an obstacle detection system to assist in automated operations, a prototype silicon detector of radiation-induced effects in humans, automated robotic gasoline pumps, force reflecting devices to assist the blind in using a computer mouse, nuclear waste facility clean-up, and field applications and demonstrations of tele-medicine systems ("tele-clinics").

140. The Committee noted with interest the proposal of the Ukrainian delegation to utilize the Evpatoria Centre of Deep Space Communication as the basis for a new international centre for space research that could be used for many activities, including coordination as a way of further strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

141. The Committee agreed that microsatellite technologies were particularly important in that regard as such technologies could provide substantial direct and spin-off benefits to countries at a lower cost than other satellite technologies. The Committee noted with interest the ongoing multilateral cooperation in the area of small multi-mission satellite development, as well as the ongoing programmes of many countries in the area of small satellites and microsatellites.

142. The view was expressed that, in the case of countries with emerging space potential, it was important for them to develop their own independent research programmes together with current cooperative efforts in international projects and missions. In the view of that delegation, that would enable those countries to determine the optimal means and pace of advancing so as to reach international levels of research and technology while making optimal use of their indigenous human and infrastructural capacities.

143. The Committee agreed that in promoting spin-off benefits and effective space applications, particularly in the case of developing countries, it was essential that the capacity to understand the technology and to develop it were considered to be of primary importance. The Committee was of the view that developing countries should enhance their potential in basic and advanced research in order to promote capacity-building for space applications and to benefit from spin-offs of space technology.

144. The Committee recommended that it should continue its consideration of the item at its forty-first session, in 1998.

E. Report of the Preparatory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference

Background

145. The Preparatory Committee noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/123, paragraph 28, had endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that a special session of the Committee (UNISPACE III), open to all States Members of the United Nations, should be convened at the United Nations Office at Vienna. In paragraph 29 of the same resolution, the Assembly had

requested the Committee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to act as the Preparatory Committee and the Advisory Committee for UNISPACE III and the Office for Outer Space Affairs to act as the executive secretariat for the Conference. The Assembly had also requested the Preparatory Committee and the Advisory Committee to carry out the tasks entrusted to them in the report of the Committee on its thirty-ninth session[8] and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the progress made in the preparatory work for UNISPACE III.

146. Having noted the above resolution and requests by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee had decided that the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should be called upon to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Assembly and had requested the Working Group to give full consideration to those tasks and to report thereon to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (A/AC.105/672, para. 158).

147. The Working Group had had before it a report by the Secretariat on matters relating to the planning of the special session of the Committee (UNISPACE III) (A/AC.105/662) and working papers submitted by the United Kingdom, on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland (A/AC.105/C.1/L.209), by the United States (A/AC.105/C.1/L.211) and by the Group of 77 (A/AC.105/C.1/L.212).

148. The Working Group had made recommendations concerning the objectives, form, venue, date, participants, provisional annotated agenda, financial aspects and additional components of the UNISPACE III Conference, which were reflected in the report of the Working Group to the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/672, annex II).

149. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had noted that the report of the Working Group provided the basis for the Committee, in its role as the Preparatory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference, to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly (A/AC.105/672, para. 159). The Subcommittee, also in its role as the Advisory Committee, had made further recommendations on the matters relating to the UNISPACE III Conference. The recommendations and views expressed in the Advisory Committee were reflected in the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-fourth session (ibid., paras. 156-165).

Recommendations of the Preparatory Committee

150. The Preparatory Committee, having considered the recommendations made by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in its role as Advisory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference, endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as contained in its report to the Subcommittee (ibid., annex II, paras. 13-23). The Committee agreed that those recommendations fully specified the objectives, venue, form, date, duration, participants, provisional annotated agenda, financial aspects and additional components of the UNISPACE III Conference. The Committee also agreed that the report of the Working Group provided the basis for the Preparatory Committee to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly in paragraph 29 of its resolution 51/123.

151. The Preparatory Committee also endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee concerning the duration and pattern of meetings that would apply to the sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies during 1999, the year in which the UNISPACE III Conference would be held (A/AC.105/672, para. 160). The Committee agreed that that recommendation had been made by the Subcommittee on

an exceptional basis for the year of the Conference so that the savings resulting from the shortening of the sessions could be utilized for the UNISPACE III Conference. The Preparatory Committee agreed that the level of conference-servicing resources available to the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the biennium 1998-1999 should remain at the same level as for the biennium 1996-1997.

152. The Committee, having considered the list of background papers for the Conference proposed by the Office for Outer Space Affairs (A/AC.105/1997/CRP.4/Rev.2), agreed that the Office, as executive secretariat for the UNISPACE III Conference, should prepare those papers in time for their consideration by Governments preparing their national papers. The Committee recommended that, in preparing the papers, the secretariat should seek expert contributions from relevant international and national institutions as well as from renowned experts.

153. The Committee also agreed that, as part of its programme of regular activities in 1998 and 1999, the United Nations Programme on Space Applications should organize regional preparatory meetings for the UNISPACE III Conference. In organizing those meetings and other activities, account should be taken of the need to have the widest participation possible, including the participation of private industry.

154. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with a recommendation of the Advisory Committee (A/AC.105/672, para. 164), the Office for Outer Space Affairs, as executive secretariat, had informed organizations of the United Nations system with space activities of the dates of the UNISPACE III Conference in order to avoid having other space-related meetings scheduled during the time of the Conference. The Committee requested the Office also to inform intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and regional commissions with space activities on the objectives, provisional agenda, dates and other details of the Conference and to invite those organizations to identify the agenda items and Conference activities for which they could make contributions to achieving the objectives of the Conference, including the organization of regional and other meetings and workshops during the Conference. The Committee agreed that the secretariat and Member States should take concrete steps to encourage the participation of private industry in the Conference.

155. The Committee agreed with the proposal made by the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities that the theme of the UNISPACE III Conference should be "Space benefits for humanity in the twenty-first century".

156. The Committee also agreed that, at its 1998 session, the Advisory Committee should agree on an indicative schedule of events to be held prior to and during the Conference, including the additional components of the Conference, taking into consideration, among others, the input provided by space agencies and international organizations. The Committee requested the secretariat to prepare, in time for the 1998 session of the Advisory Committee, an indicative schedule of those events, including the distribution of agenda items between its two committees, the participation of international organizations and industry, technical presentations, poster sessions, evening lectures, exhibition and other related aspects of the Conference, for consideration by the Advisory Committee.

157. The Committee agreed that, to develop the report for the UNISPACE III Conference, the secretariat would provide an initial draft in time for the 1998 session of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee and the Preparatory Committee at their 1998 sessions would provide comments on the draft of the

report, on the basis of which the secretariat would provide a revised version in order to assist the Advisory Committee in finalizing the draft report in February 1999. Those arrangements would also allow for a short meeting of the Preparatory Committee prior to the UNISPACE III Conference, consistent with the pattern of meetings as indicated in paragraph 151 above, in order to finalize any outstanding issues on the draft report.

158. The Committee agreed that the Office for Outer Space Affairs should inform all Member States as early as possible of the dates, objectives, provisional annotated agenda and other details of the Conference and invite them to submit inputs on the draft report to be prepared by the secretariat. Such inputs should address issues related to the items of the provisional annotated agenda.

159. The Preparatory Committee agreed that the Advisory Committee, at its 1998 session, should give further consideration to the following: (a) how private industry should be involved in the work of the UNISPACE III Conference; and (b) how the preparatory regional meetings could best contribute to the deliberations and results of the Conference.

160. The Committee recommended that the secretariat should take steps to encourage participation by high-level officials, eminent scientists and experts, especially from developing countries, which could benefit from the use of space technology in their economic and social development programmes.

161. The Committee noted that in his statement, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs had invited Member States, space agencies and relevant national and international organizations to consider supporting the preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference by seconding experts to the Office at the junior or senior expert level, by co-sponsoring workshops related to the additional components of the Conference and through other voluntary contributions.

F. Other matters

1. Reports to the Committee

162. The Committee noted with appreciation the participation in its work and in that of its subcommittees of representatives of ESCAP, FAO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO, ITU, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), IAEA, the Association of Space Explorers (ASE), COSPAR, ESA, the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), IAF, IAU, ILA, INTERSPUTNIK, Inmarsat, ISPRS and Intelsat. The Committee expressed appreciation to those organizations that had submitted reports on their activities and requested interested organizations to continue to keep it informed of their activities relating to the peaceful uses of outer space.

163. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat should invite Member States to submit annual reports on their space activities. In addition to information on national and international space programmes, the reports could include information in response to requests from the Working Group of the Whole as well as information on spin-off benefits of space activities and other topics requested by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

2. Membership of the Committee

164. The view was expressed that the practice of sharing seats on a rotating basis should be ended, that the will and capacity of a State to contribute to the work of the Committee should be taken into account as elements in appointing members of the Committee and that, therefore, all rotating members should become full permanent members as early as possible.

3. Observer status

165. It was noted that the International Space University had applied for observer status with the Committee and that the related correspondence and statutes of that non-governmental organization had been circulated at the thirty-fourth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee for the information of States members of the Committee.

166. The Committee decided to grant permanent observer status to the International Space University on the understanding that, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its thirty-third session concerning observer status for non-governmental organizations, the organization would apply for consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

4. Records of the Committee

167. The General Assembly, in its resolution 51/123, paragraph 10, had noted with satisfaction that the Committee had been provided, at its thirty-ninth session, with unedited verbatim transcripts of that session in lieu of verbatim records and that the Committee would evaluate the use of unedited transcripts at its fortieth session and inform the General Assembly at its fifty-second session of the experience of the Committee with the transcripts.

168. The Committee noted that the Legal Subcommittee, on the basis of its recommendation at its thirty-fifth session, in 1996, had begun, starting with its thirty-sixth session, to be provided with verbatim (unedited) transcripts of its sessions in lieu of summary records.

169. The Committee had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat entitled "Utilization of unedited verbatim transcripts" (A/AC.105/1997/CRP.3), which provided details on the cost of the unedited verbatim transcripts in comparison with procès-verbaux and summary records.

170. The Committee agreed, on the basis of its evaluation on the use of unedited verbatim transcripts at its thirty-ninth session, to continue the use of those transcripts in lieu of verbatim records and to further review its requirements for those transcripts at its forty-first session, in 1998.

5. Possible consideration of new projects in outer space activities

171. The Committee noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/123, paragraph 39, had requested the Committee to continue its work in accordance with that resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, including the views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

The Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, beginning with its thirty-fifth session, in 1998, might deliberate upon such projects or programmes which it might consider to be undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations so long as it did not interfere with the planning and preparations for the UNISPACE III Conference.

G. Future work

172. The Committee noted the views of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the future role and work of the Subcommittee and endorsed the recommendations concerning the agenda for its thirty-fifth session, as reflected in the report on its thirty-fourth session (A/AC.105/672, paras. 169-172).

173. Regarding the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee, the Committee recommended that the Subcommittee, at its thirty-seventh session, should:

(a) Continue its consideration of the question of the review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space (item 3);

(b) Continue, through its Working Group on agenda item 4, its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union (item 4);

(c) Begin its review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space (item 5);

(d) Continue its consideration of other matters, including informal consultations on specific proposals already made for possible new agenda items for the Legal Subcommittee (item 6).

174. With regard to the item contained in paragraph 173 (a) above, the Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee that the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space (agenda item 3) should again be suspended for one year, pending the results of the work in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, without prejudice to the possibility of reconvening the Working Group on that item if, in the opinion of the Legal Subcommittee, sufficient progress was made in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session, in 1998, to warrant the reconvening of the Working Group by the Legal Subcommittee.

175. The Committee recalled its recommendation that the Legal Subcommittee, on a permanent basis, should rotate each year the order of consideration of substantive agenda items. However, it endorsed the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee that the order of rotation should be suspended for its thirty-seventh session, in 1998, and that the substantive agenda items should be considered at that session in the following order: items 4, 5 and 3.

176. The Committee took note of the measures that had been adopted by the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-first session as well as additional measures agreed for future sessions of the Subcommittee in order to improve the utilization of conference services. The Committee endorsed the agreement of the Legal Subcommittee that a similar organization of work would serve as the basis for

organizing the work of the Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, including efforts to conclude the session of the Legal Subcommittee as early as practicable in accordance with paragraphs 12 (k), 13 and 14 of the report of the Legal Subcommittee (A/AC.105/674).

177. The view was expressed that the duration of the session of the Committee should be reduced to one week.

H. Schedule of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

178. The Committee indicated the following tentative timetable for 1998:

	Date	Site
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (Advisory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference)	9-20 February	Vienna
Legal Subcommittee	23 March-3 April	Vienna
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (Preparatory Committee for the UNISPACE III Conference)	3-12 June	Vienna

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/51/20), para. 203.

[2] See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 9-21 August 1982 (A/CONF.101/10 and Corr.1 and 2).

[3] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/50/20), para. 44.

[4] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

[5] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/51/20), para. 211 (c).

[6] General Assembly resolution 37/92, annex.

[7] General Assembly resolution 41/65, annex.

[8] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/51/20), paras. 178-185.

ANNEX I

Note by the Secretariat

Working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies*

1. At the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, held from 3 to 14 June 1996, the Committee entrusted its Chairman, with assistance of the other members of the bureau and the Secretariat, to undertake inter-sessional informal consultations among the members of the Committee with the aim of reaching consensus decisions before the next session of the Committee on the modalities of establishing a new composition of bureaux keeping in view the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation. The Committee further recommended that all proposals made by delegations and groups of delegations, including the need for agenda restructuring and an examination of the duration of the session, would be taken fully into account in the framework of those informal consultations.

2. In accordance with the above mandate, the Chairman convened six meetings of inter-sessional informal consultations among members of the Committee between 24 July 1996 and 16 April 1997 in New York and Vienna. As a result, members of the Committee agreed upon the following Chairman's package proposal on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, agenda structures and duration of sessions:

CHAIRMAN'S PACKAGE PROPOSAL

A. Working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies

Composition of the bureaux

- Every aspect of the establishment of the bureaux should be agreed upon by a consensus of the Committee.

- The bureaux will consist of the five current offices: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee; Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee; and Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

- The five offices should rotate among the five regional groups, with one office being allocated to each of the regional groups: African Group, Asian Group, Eastern European Group, Latin American and Caribbean Group, and Group of Western European and other States.

- Consultations should be held among the regional groups two sessions before the beginning of the next term to agree on the current officer(s) to be re-elected, if any, and to determine which group will be responsible for which office, taking into account the principle of rotation. This is generally in line with the practice of the General Assembly for electing officers for its Main Committees.

- The qualifications for candidates to the offices of the bureaux should include: (a) demonstration of interest in the work of the Committee

* Originally issued under the symbol A/AC.105/L.213.

and its subsidiary bodies; (b) recognized experience and background relevant to the work of those bodies; and (c) commitment to fulfilling the tasks entrusted during the tenure.

- The term of each office should be three years; no regional group should hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

- When any officer cannot complete a term, the regional group holding the office concerned should nominate a candidate to be elected at the beginning of the session that immediately follows the termination of that officer's tenure; if such an election takes place in either of the subcommittees, it should be approved retroactively by the Committee at its session during the same year.

- The election of chairmen of working groups established by the Committee and the two subcommittees should be excluded from the above arrangements, and should follow the current practice.

Agenda structures

- *'Review of the status of the five international legal instruments on outer space' should be included as an item on the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee. The Legal Subcommittee should give consideration to the possible inclusion of new items on 'Comparison of the norms of space law and those of international environmental law' and 'Review of existing norms of international law applicable to space debris' and other items such as those listed in A/AC.105/639, paragraph 54.*

- Any proposal for including additional items in the agendas of the Committee or its subcommittees should be accompanied by a work plan, goals to be pursued and a time frame for consideration of the proposed items.

- Any additional item may be included in an agenda or any item already under consideration may be deleted from an agenda with the approval of the General Assembly.

Duration of sessions

- Consensus agreement should be reached on the agenda structures before determining the alternative meeting pattern.

- The new meeting pattern should be two weeks each for the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, in February and in March, respectively, and one and one half weeks for the Committee in June, with the total meeting time being five and one half weeks.

- The Committee may decide on an ad hoc basis to extend or shorten the duration of a particular session whenever there is such a need.

B. Members of the bureaux

3. At the sixth and final meeting, on 16 April 1997, it was also agreed that the composition of the bureaux of the Committee for the first three-year term starting with the current session should be the following:

Chairman: U. R. Rao (India)

First Vice-Chairman: Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile)

Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur: Mouslim Kabbaj (Morocco)

4. It was further agreed that for the first three-year term starting in 1998, the Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee should be the following:

Scientific and Technical Subcommittee: Dietrich Rex (Germany)

Legal Subcommittee: Václav Mikulka (Czech Republic)

5. It was also agreed that the Chairman of the Committee for the second three-year term starting in the year 2000 would be Raimundo Gonzalez (Chile). The First Vice-Chairman and Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur for the second term would be determined at that time through consultations between the Asian Group and the African Group. The chairmanships of both subcommittees would continue to be held for the second three-year period, starting in 2001, by the Western European and Others Group and the Eastern European Group.

ANNEX II

[Original: Spanish]

Punta del Este Declaration

The Third Space Conference of the Americas

1. Emphasizes the importance of the Conference as a forum that reflects the interest of all participating countries in promoting cooperation in the area of space activities and reaffirms the commitment of the States of the region to the exploration and peaceful use of space activities;

2. Reiterates and reaffirms the importance of making further progress in the formulation of norms that will promote the development of international space law. In this connection, the Conference expresses the hope that the United Nations General Assembly will adopt the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries which was adopted by consensus at the 1996 session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;

3. Affirms that, in order to create and expand space capabilities in the countries of the region, the Parties shall pursue continuity, coordination and stability in the long term as well as the development of technology in national space activities. The Parties also agree to cooperate and interact as necessary to facilitate future projects;

4. Reaffirms the importance of international cooperation in space matters in an increasingly interdependent world and invites international agencies and organizations to strengthen their participation in support of space activities in the region;

5. Urges that national programmes, government agencies and international organizations support educational activities in the fields of science and technology and promote the work of scientific and academic groups participating in space projects and activities in the region;

6. Firmly believes that cooperation projects pertaining to outer space will lead to the broadest possible development and application of space technology in the region;

7. Invites the United Nations system, particularly through the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, to continue to provide strong support for follow-up to the recommendations of the Conference;

8. Invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean with the necessary support to follow up the recommendations of the Conference. To this end, the Conference requests the Commission to include in its annual report to the United Nations General Assembly the actions taken in this area;

9. Supports the recommendation made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its 1996 session that an international meeting on space-related topics (UNISPACE III) should be held in 1999; expresses interest in

having the UNISPACE III agenda include, inter alia, an item on the use of space technology in support of sustainable development, the environment and education;

10. Reaffirms the importance of ensuring that the Space Conferences of the Americas continue to be held in the region every three years. During this time the pro tempore secretariat, which is located in the host country of the most recent Conference, shall provide follow-up to the outcome of the Conference and provide support for space cooperation in the region, to which end it may rely on the assistance of an inter-sessional group;

11. Endorses the conclusions and the work of the Conference as well as the projects presented in the various committees with express government support and financing from the countries proposing and participating in such projects, as noted in the report of the rapporteur;

12. Decides to adopt a plan of action for regional cooperation;

13. Urges the pro tempore secretariat of the Third Space Conference of the Americas to disseminate this Declaration and the other conclusions of the Conference to bilateral and multilateral forums and organizations;

14. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for convening and organizing the Third Space Conference of the Americas and for its efforts to ensure the success of the Conference.

Plan of action for regional cooperation in space matters

The countries participating in the Third Space Conference of the Americas,

Taking into account the desire to strengthen international cooperation in space matters,

Considering the regional and international cooperation projects endorsed by the Third Space Conference of the Americas,

Hereby decide to:

1. Promote and expand existing multilateral cooperation programmes, through such mechanisms as they may deem appropriate for the integration of other existing national programmes or projects, and the development of new programmes or projects as required, inter alia, in the following areas:

(a) Protection of the environment and support for sustainable development;

(b) Prevention, early warning, rescue operations and mitigation of the effects of natural and man-made disasters;

(c) Education in the basic and practical aspects of the development and use of space science and technology and in the use of technology for academic education and social and cultural development;

(d) Strengthening of space-related research and development programmes in the field of basic, juridical and applied sciences;

2. Promote the active participation of universities and scientific, technical and juridical associations within and outside the region as well as of

space agencies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in international cooperation projects;

3. Entrust the pro tempore secretariat with the task of following up cooperation projects endorsed by the Conference in order to prepare a progress report thereon;

4. Promote, with the agreement of the agencies and institutions concerned, the convening of working meetings aimed at identifying areas of cooperation and follow-up;

5. Request the pro tempore secretariat, with the assistance of the inter-sessional group, to act as a catalyst for this Plan of Action, by disseminating the necessary information, making the appropriate contacts and taking the relevant steps for the implementation of the activities provided for under the Plan.